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AFTINET Bulletin No. 175
August 2011

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1 Trading away public health? Health Issues in the Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement – Public Meeting 1st September 2011.

The Australian government is negotiating a Trans-Pacific Partnership free trade agreement with the United States, New Zealand, Chile, Peru, Brunei, Singapore, Malaysia and Vietnam.

But the agenda on health issues is being set by giant US corporations. Leaked US documents reveal that pharmaceutical companies are demanding higher prices for medicines through changes to the Australian Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme, and more rights to delay access to cheaper generic medicines. US tobacco companies like Philip Morris are demanding the right to sue governments over proposed tobacco plain packaging legislation. Negotiations are continuing in September. We must urge our government to stand by its policies and refuse these demands.

Public meeting details

Date: Thursday, September 1

Time: 12:30-1.30 PM,

Where: Jubilee room, New South Wales Parliament House, Macquarie Street, Sydney

Speakers include:

Dr Deborah Gleeson, Public Health Association of Australia.

Dr Patricia Randal, Australian Fair Trade and Investment Network

Jason Appleby, Australian Federation of Aids Organisations (AFAO)

The Australian Fair Trade and Investment Network will be launching a leaflet explaining the issues and what you can do about them.

Please RSVP by cob August 31 to Harvey Purse campaign@aftinet.org.au,
Ph: 02 9212 7242.

2 Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement (TPPA) – Petition – Deadline Extended: ACTION NEEDED

The deadline has been **extended until 9th September** to return the AFTINET parliamentary petition about the Trans Pacific Partnership Agreement (TPPA), asking the government not to support any agreement which undermines Australian health, social, cultural and environmental policies and calls for the government to support the inclusion of enforceable

labour rights and environmental protections in the agreement, and to support publication of the text of the agreement for public and parliamentary debate before it is ratified.

To sign the petition and/or download a copy to collect signatures go to the AFTINET website: <http://aftinet.org.au/cms/trans-pacific-partnership-agreement/tpa-petition-house-representatives> and follow the links to download the petition.

Completed petitions have to be returned to the AFTINET office by close of business on **9th September 2011**.

AFTINET has launched its facebook page with the petition taking centre stage – follow this link to our facebook page:

<http://www.facebook.com/pages/Aftinet/219004528130731?sk=wall>

Put a link to the AFTINET website and/or facebook page on your website or personal webpage asking people to follow the link to sign the petition.

3 Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement (TPPA) – UPDATE

Location and Timing of 2011 Negotiations:

The following are the dates and locations of the remaining 2011 negotiating rounds.

- The 8th round is from 6 – 15 September, Chicago, US.
- The 9th round is from 24 – 28 October, Lima, Peru.
- The 10th round will be in November, Honolulu, Hawaii USA (unofficial).

Chicago Round: Civil society will maintain the pressure on negotiators by again being present in Chicago. AFTINET will be represented by Dr Patricia Ranald, who will be presenting a workshop as part of the stakeholder events.

It is strongly rumoured that the US will finally table its Intellectual Property Rights text, which will reflect the demands of US pharmaceutical and media companies for more rights for them as holders of patents and copyright at the expense of consumers.

DFAT Health Roundtable/Briefing: On Wednesday 3rd August AFTINET attended a roundtable briefing on the TPPA and Health organised by the Public Health Association (PHA). The meeting was well attended by both DFAT and other Government officials alongside Health organisations and concerned individuals.

All participants contributed to a wide ranging discussion of the issues and concerns about the impact on health issues of the TPPA.

It emerged that DFAT officials have been holding the government's line that Australia will not accept changes that impact on the PBS and public health policies. However it was also clear that this was being used as a defensive posture and was not being used in support of the positions of other countries who are also opposed to the expanded regimes proposed by the US.

DFAT officials re-assured those present that they were keenly aware of the potential for other parts of the agreement to impact on public health policy and the PBS. For example AFTINET raised the issue of Blood Products and government procurement to which DFAT officials responded that they were seeking a "carve out" on Health and Community Services grounds in the Government Procurement chapter which would protect things such as Blood Products.

Civil society representatives present welcomed the statements by DFAT officials that they were implementing government policy on Intellectual Property Rights, Investor-State Dispute processes, accepting no changes that would impact in the PBS and public health policy.

However it was pointed out that unintended impacts can happen and that there were still differences in legal opinions on whether or not changes would be required.

Officials from DFAT agreed to regularly convene this group to discuss issues from the TPPA impacting on Health and to keep community health groups up to date with progress in the negotiations. This is an important step as it will allow better monitoring of the threats to the PBS and Public Health policy and whether government policy is being implemented.

We need to remain vigilant to ensure that there are no impacts from the TPPA on the PBS and Public Health policy. There is still the risk that trade-offs may occur. DFAT officials were clear that they felt they could make gains in access to markets from the existing group of nations – something that could only happen with trade-offs as we already have FTAs with all of the parties except Peru.

September 2011 – Lobby Trip:

AFTINET will be visiting MPs both in Canberra and Sydney in September to discuss with them community concerns about the TPPA. This will be our second lobbying of parliamentarians in this campaign.

We encourage members to use the leaflets and resources of AFTINET to visit their local member of the federal parliament to highlight community concerns about the TPPA.

Food Security/Agriculture:

It has been confirmed that there have been some discussions around food security in the TPPA negotiations and there is potential for something on food security to be included in the agreement. We will attempt to find out more and report to members about this aspect.

It was reported by *Western Farm Press* on 3rd August that on 1st August in the USA, Republican representatives introduced a new bill focused on the TPPA called the “Agricultural Trade Facilitation Act”, which appears to include the facilitation of removing GE and organic labelling, minimising or removing moratoria on GE/GM crops and the potential to lower quarantine standards.

Resources: Our leaflets on the TPPA remain available from our website www.aftinet.org.au.

Book: A book on the Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement is available for purchase, with AFTINET benefiting from Australian sales of the book.

No Ordinary Deal - Unmasking the Trans-Pacific Partnership Free Trade Agreement. Edited by Jane Kelsey. Published by Allen & Unwin

Order form can be downloaded from the AFTINET website:

<http://aftinet.org.au/cms/sites/default/files/No%20Ordinary%20Deal%20A4%20Flyer.pdf>

Media Coverage: As media coverage occurs the items are placed on our website on the TPPA Campaign media page: <http://aftinet.org.au/cms/tppa-media-reports-our-campaign>.

Individual Actions: Individuals are encouraged to join the TPPA campaign through both our new petition (see first story in this bulletin) and our email/letter campaign to Dr Craig Emerson, the Trade Minister. Please go to our TPPA Campaign website page: <http://aftinet.org.au/cms/trans-pacific-partnership-agreement/trans-pacific-partnership-agreement>.

You can also place a link to the AFTINET website: www.aftinet.org.au or AFTINET facebook page <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Aftinet/219004528130731?sk=wall> on your website or personal web page.

(Sources: TPPA allies listserve, DFAT briefing papers, Public Citizen, Western Farm Press - <http://westernfarmpress.com/government/agricultural-trade-facilitation-act-introduced>)

6 WTO Update:

Vanuatu WTO Accession:

As mentioned in the last bulletin Vanuatu has passed the final stage for accession to (joining) the WTO. The Vanuatu parliament is yet to complete the process and it has been delayed. Civil society and business in Vanuatu continue to oppose the accession and continue their campaign. Civil society from around the Pacific converged on Vanuatu in the week of the 8th August to reinforce the views being put to the Vanuatu government by its own civil society and business.

Doha Round Update:

It is now generally acknowledged that the Doha round is dead but no official pronouncement is likely to be made.

There is a lot of scrambling to try to salvage something – the most likely would be a package for Least Developed Countries (LDC) being presented to the Eighth Ministerial Council, though even this is looking touch and go as the US, Australia and the EU in particular put forward additional issues to try to create an LDC-Plus package, with proposals unlikely to be accepted by developing countries.

Most discussion has now moved on to try to work out 'where to from here' for the WTO. One proposal is to have a package of "21st Century" issues to form the basis of a new round of trade negotiations including trade and currency exchange rates, climate change, and food security. There has also been extensive discussion about how to differentiate the WTO from the Doha Development Round to show that they are not one and the same – it seems the WTO is finally recognising it has a credibility issue.

There is still a significant push on to try to keep development at the centre of the proposed 8th Ministerial Meeting in December. Much hinges on the next council meeting in September which will determine the agenda for the December meeting and whether a ministerial communiqué will be issued or if they will go with the lesser outcome of a Director General statement as they did at the 7th Ministerial meeting in 2009.

There has been discussion on trying to have some outcomes beyond the development agenda such as trade policy review mechanisms, transparency mechanisms for regional trade agreements and simplification of the accession process.

(Sources: DFAT Doha Briefing papers, Third World Network, OWISNF network, PACTrade, WTO General Council Minutes)

7 PACER Plus Update:

Office of Chief Trade Advisor (OCTA) Funding – The ongoing funding of OCTA is still not finalised. New Zealand has agreed to a contract that is acceptable to the Pacific Island Countries (PICs). The New Zealand contract retains the independence of the OCTA and guarantees New Zealand's funds. Australia however is still dragging its feet and trying to put in place a contract which the PICs and OCTA believe compromises the independence of the OCTA and restricts its ability to seek funding from elsewhere. Australia also remains insistent that the OCTA be restricted to providing advice to the PICs only on PACER-Plus. As previously outlined by AFTINET this is tantamount to asking DFAT to only negotiate one trade matter at a time and not to take into account what is happening in other negotiations.

Auckland Leaders Meeting: This year is the 40th anniversary of the Pacific Island Forum Leaders Meeting and is its 42nd meeting. It is taking place in Auckland from 6-9 September 2011.

This will be a good opportunity for civil society in the Pacific to get together and put forward community concerns about PACER-Plus including the slow pace of national consultations,

the need to look for alternative solutions – or as the people of the Pacific put it “the need to develop Pacific strategies built on Pacific solutions not just accept the alternate neo-liberal solutions being put forward in PACER-Plus.” A program of civil society events has been put together by Oxfam New Zealand and is available from: <http://www.oxfam.org.nz/what-you-can-do/events/pacific-islands-forum/activities>.

NSA Meeting: Alongside PACER-Plus negotiations once a year, a Non-State Actors (NSA) meeting takes place. This year the meeting will be held in Australia alongside planned negotiations between trade officials in November and will be in either Brisbane or Adelaide. It is important to our allies in the Pacific that as many Australian civil society organisations as possible attend the NSA to support their claims in front of DFAT and Island officials. AFTINET will provide more details as they become available.

(Sources: PACTRADE, DFAT website, PANG Media Releases)

8 FTA Updates:

The following FTAs have had some movement or negotiations since our last Bulletin. Those not mentioned have had no significant events or negotiations occur.

China-Australia FTA:

The 16th negotiating round was held on 5-7th July 2011 in Canberra. Reports have indicated that the round was more of a stock take of where things were up to rather than a substantive negotiation.

The reports show that differences still exist in most areas including market access for goods, rules of origin, technical barriers, customs procedures, Intellectual Property and electronic commerce. The reports also indicate that the negotiations are still taking place around dispute settlement, thought to be a state-to-state process.

The reports also indicate that Australia has made requests for the inclusion of a government procurement chapter and one on competition policy and that China will present a paper on co-operation at the next round of negotiations.

India-Australia FTA:

DFAT have extended the deadline for submissions with a new closing date of Friday 16th September 2011.

We encourage members to make submissions. AFTINET has placed our submission to DFAT on our website: www.aftinet.org.au.

(Sources: DFAT website updates, DFAT Briefings)

9 Upcoming Events/Actions:

Robin Hood Tax Petition – Deadline August 31st 2011.

An international petition to the leaders of the G20 and the European Union calling for the implementation of a Financial Transactions Tax (the Robin Hood Tax) is open for signatures. The aim is to collect half a million signatures world wide. If you can please help promote the international petition through your social media networks that would be great.

Signed international petition to the G20 yet? <http://robinhoodtax.org.au/>

The next Afternoon Tea For the Future will be held on: Tuesday, August 30th from 2pm to 4pm at the Edmund Rice Centre, 15 Henley Rd, near Flemington Station.

Topic for discussion: “SWEET WATER”.

Sea level rise due to global warming has resulted in shortage of fresh water supply for communities living in coastal regions such as South-West Bangladesh whose livelihood is

being affected by severe flooding, food crises and diseases. 70% of land in this region will go under water. Come and join us in relaxed friendly discussion and watching this interesting film. See how Caritas is working on development projects supporting sustainable agriculture, environmental conservation, etc, to reduce its impact on these vulnerable communities. Relaxed informal discussion.

Donation of \$2 or \$5 depending on ability to pay. Please send enquiries or comments on this invitation to or phone 02 8762-4200; E-mail address: stephanies@erc.org.au

Ann Pettifor Australian Speaking Tour

Financing the transformation to a zero carbon economy - Why we can afford more jobs and a better life.

Ann Pettifor is a member of the Green New Deal working group in the UK, a group focused on working out practical ways to make the global economic system fairer, give workers a better deal, wind back the power of corporations and the big banks, and at the same time lead the necessary transformation to ecological sustainability.

To find out when Ann is in your city and for a complete listing of events and links, including special workshops for union members, see

<http://www.search.org.au/archives/2608>.

Want to know more?

Green New Deal group: greennewdealgroup.org

Ann Pettifor's blog on economic crisis: debtonation.org

Macroeconomics think-tank: primeeconomics.org

Contact Bron for more information, flyers, or to RSVP on (02) 9211 4164 or bron@search.org.au

10 New Resources available on the web or at our website:

PACER-Plus: A program of civil society events has been put together by Oxfam New Zealand and is available from: <http://www.oxfam.org.nz/what-you-can-do/events/pacific-islands-forum/activities>.

Fair Trade Response: Fairtrade ANZ refutes all unsubstantiated claims in the paper "Fairtrade and its (unexpected) consequences for the Pacific Island Countries", by doctoral candidates Uwe Kaufmann, Di Yuan, Altaf Alam and Faqin Lin.
<http://xa.yimg.com/kq/groups/22904928/641310491/name/Fairtrade%20response%20to%20free%20trade%20argument.pdf>